

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 448  
By Fitzhugh

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to study  
community mental health agencies.

WHEREAS, community mental health agencies play an essential role in the treatment of persons suffering from chronic and/or severe mental illness; and

WHEREAS, the growing trend of deinstitutionalizing certain persons suffering from chronic and/or severe mental illness has placed an additional strain on the already overburdened resources of community mental health agencies; and

WHEREAS, the level of funding for community mental health agencies is not sufficient to permit such agencies to adequately serve those members of the chronically and/or severely mentally ill population who are institutionalized but will, due to deinstitutionalization, be discharged from state institutions, in addition to the mentally ill persons such agencies are already serving in a community setting; and

WHEREAS, beginning in March 1996, mental health services in Tennessee will be administered by TennCare Partners through contract with several statewide Behavioral Health Organizations (BHOs); and

WHEREAS, the state now spends about \$224 million each year providing services to people with schizophrenia, manic depression and other chronic, severe mental illnesses; many of these services are provided by community mental health agencies; and

WHEREAS, such funds pay for services ranging from hospitalization and medication to housing and case management; and

WHEREAS, under TennCare Partners, this fee-for-service reimbursement system will be replaced by a payment-per-person or capitated system; and

WHEREAS, Behavioral Health Organizations will receive a specific amount per patient to provide all needed services to people with chronic and severe mental illness; and

WHEREAS, there is concern within the mental health community that the implementation of TennCare Partners could result in many chronically and/or severely mentally ill persons not receiving the services necessary for their well being; and

WHEREAS, the adequate funding and operation of community mental health agencies and the provision of appropriate services to chronically and/or severely mentally ill persons are of vital importance to the public welfare, and this General Assembly should carefully examine such agencies' role in Tennessee's health care system; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That there is hereby created a special joint committee to study the funding and operation of community mental health agencies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall be composed of three (3) members of the House of Representatives and three (3) members of the Senate, to be appointed by the respective Speakers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all appropriate agencies of state government shall provide assistance to the special joint committee, upon the request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly. At its first meeting, the special joint committee shall elect a chair, vice-chair and such other officers that the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all legislative members of the special joint committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the One Hundredth General Assembly no later than February 1, 1997, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.

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